

Arizona Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (AAAC)

Virtual via Google Meet - <https://meet.google.com/pyq-gjnh-rwb>

Call in number: 510-680-3563

PIN: 146 129 264#

Public Meeting

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

8:00 am

Meeting Minutes

(Draft manuscript. Subject to approval at the next meeting.)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT (Virtually)

Mr. Dennis Anthony, Chairman (Arizona Public Service)

Mr. Frank Grijalva (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - IBEW International)

Mr. Charles Hankins (Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station)

Ms. Melissa Huffman (City of Phoenix)

Ms. Karen King (Training Director, Tucson Electrical JATC)

Mr. Rob Stenson (City of Phoenix ARIZONA@WORK)

Ms. Linda Vedo (Central Arizona Project Apprenticeship Coordinator)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Paul Cozza (TechOne IT)

Mr. Tom Dunn (Arizona Builders Alliance)

Ms. Cindy Gutierrez (Arizona Department of Education Career and Technical Education)

Ms. Denise Kingman (Pima Community College)

Vacancy (Arizona Industrial Commission)

STAFF PRESENT for Department of Economic Security/Registration Agency

William (Willie) Higgins, Arizona Apprenticeship Office (State Apprenticeship Program Lead)

Cheri Czerwinski, Arizona Apprenticeship Office (Regional Program Manager)

Joann Bueno, Arizona Apprenticeship Office (Apprenticeship Training Representative)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Anthony called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Anthony welcomed all committee members and asked all in attendance to introduce themselves.

ACCEPTANCE OF JULY 14, 2021 MINUTES

Mr. Anthony requested a motion to accept the AAAC meeting minutes of July 14, 2021. Motion was moved by Rob Stenson and seconded by Karen King. Motion to accept minutes was unanimously approved by those present as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS

OUTSTANDING APPRENTICE AWARDS CEREMONY IDEAS/ALTERNATIVES

Mr. Anthony reiterated the Committee's previous decision in a special meeting to not move forward with the ceremony.

Mr. Higgins explained that though a decision had been made to cancel the in-person event, there have been ideas and comments from several members of the committee to reconsider the possibility of holding a virtual event. The magnitude of trying to put together an awards ceremony honoring three years of awardees poses a daunting task for the Committee next year. The significance of commemorating 80 years of Apprenticeship in Arizona also came into play, hence, the feasibility of having a virtual ceremony, deferred to a later date perhaps, might be a discussion worth revisiting.

Ms. King expressed that timing would pose a problem with regards to planning – whether it is in-person or virtual. Limited resources were cited as a challenge as most of the funds gathered from past ceremonies were from sponsorships and table reservations, typically from the utility programs, which are now not available due to the cancellation of the in-person event. Regarding concerns about the scale of an event with more than a year of outstanding apprentices recognized, Ms. King explained that it can be managed by possibly, extending the event duration, skipping the happy hour, reducing the number of speakers, and having the apprentices move quicker on stage. Furthermore, from her experience, apprentices look forward to these events and would be quite disappointed at the absence of such a prestigious event honoring their hard work and accomplishment.

Ms. Huffman explained that this was a special year for Apprenticeship in Arizona and to find an alternative way to celebrate the outstanding apprentice awards might be prudent. Looking back, when the events extended well into late evening just celebrating those years' awardees, to celebrate three years' worth might become quite taxing. Furthermore, having all awardees from all three years participating into one event would necessitate a bigger venue and more detailed coordination and logistics. Ms. Huffman added that a virtual event may be able to help minimize costs and coordination as it may be provided by the City of Phoenix PIO.

Mr. Hankins also expressed his position on the matter. He has had conversations with his apprentices, and they are all in agreement that they would rather wait and take a chance on an in-person ceremony next year as opposed to something that is virtual. This is something these apprentices indeed look forward to and do otherwise would be "watering it down".

Mr. Higgins recognized the pros and cons but more importantly emphasized the need to have a contingency plan moving forward. The current challenges posed by Covid-19 and its variants will now significantly affect any future planning with regards to this event.

Mr. Grijalva brought up looking into the feasibility of holding an Outstanding Apprentice Awards ceremony in the spring of 2022 for the 2020-2021 nominees and get back on track with the 2022 nominees in the fall. He added possibly of asking the usual program sponsors if they may be interested in something like that.

Mr. Higgins concluded by expressing appreciation from the Chairman for hearing the discussion again and reiterating the decision of the Committee to cancel the event. Should there be any developments leading to a possible event in the spring, it may be reopened for discussion in the next meeting

scheduled for January 12, 2022. In the meantime, to better prepare for the 2022 event, the Apprenticeship Office requests that all nominations from years covered be submitted as soon as possible. This will not only help in facilitating the event better but also prevent things from falling through the cracks due to increased staffing turnover at most of these programs. The Apprenticeship Office will send out another reminder to everyone soon. The Apprenticeship Office will also request all programs ensure accuracy in the information they are submitting to prevent errors thus conserving time, effort, and resources.

GRANT FUNDING DISBURSEMENT

Mr. Higgins explained to the Committee the recent developments on the TEGL 17-18 grant. The Apprenticeship Office has received clearer directions on how the funds shall be disbursed among qualifying apprentices and their programs. Qualified apprentices may be able to receive up to \$400 in funding towards Related Training Services. The Apprenticeship Office will be collecting W-9 forms from programs with qualifying apprentices for initial setup into DES' accounting system to facilitate efficient distribution of funds. A technical assistance meeting will be held at a scheduled date to be determined to provide further instructions regarding the distribution and reimbursement of funds. The Apprenticeship Office encourages all registered apprenticeship programs that can participate with qualified apprentices to avail of the fund distribution.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on CFR 29:29 Part A and CFR 29:30: Willie Higgins: No significant movement has been observed. Documents are on-hold currently.

Grants TEGL 15-19 and TEGL 17-18: Willie Higgins: TEGL 15-19 is progressing as scheduled. The Apprenticeship Office has increased intermediary sponsor participation as well as strengthened ties with CTE programs. Grant funds for TEGL 17-18 are being prepared for distribution.

Procedure for replacing missing certifications: Willie Higgins: Entire Committee agrees that wallet cards may be replaced however, State Certificates may not. This matter has been resolved and will be removed from items for discussion in future meetings.

DES Apprenticeship Staff – Update: Willie Higgins: The Apprenticeship Office is anticipating the addition of a new staff member who will be starting on November 15th. The team is also waiting for feedback from HR for another offer that was made to another candidate. The team has been verbally advised of plans to add 2-3 more members by January 2022.

STATUS REPORT

Chairman's Report:

Mr. Dennis Anthony (Arizona Public Service) – Acknowledged the current difficulties in recruitment being faced by all employers throughout the country, particularly trying to fill the need for qualified journeymen and trainers. Mr. Anthony refers to this challenge as an opportunity as well as realization for many regarding the value of training and development of one's workforce.

APPRENTICESHIP ACTIVITY REPORT:

Willie Higgins: 258 currently registered programs and 4,301 registered apprentices plus 32 that were approved that morning and would not appear on the RAPIDS report until next day, 7.8% of participants are Veterans and 8.5% are Female participants, the highest ever been recorded in AZ. Mr. Higgins shared significant increase in comparison to these numbers from 2017 with 2,719 apprentices, 129 programs, 4% Female participation, 4.2% Veteran participation back then. Furthermore, the diversity of industries has also increased from what was originally 5 industries to 16. The Apprenticeship Office continues to create opportunities throughout the state through partnerships with Community Colleges. One of them is Gateway CC, providing the curriculum for the CompTIA & Maher-Maher Program, the first of its kind in the nation. Likewise, Arizona Western College in Yuma started off with an electrical program and has since expanded into water treatment recently received a grant for \$5 million which they intend to spend mostly on increasing apprenticeship in that region.

Mr. Anthony acknowledged and appreciated the Apprenticeship Office for its support and efforts through the years for making apprenticeship “a much bigger tent” by creating new opportunities and expanding the reaches, geographic or otherwise, of apprenticeship in Arizona

COUNCIL MEMBERS REPORT

Ms. Karen King (Tucson Electrical JATC) – There are about 135 apprentices currently. They are taking on a new class which the deadline for application is set for November 2, 2021. A grant has recently been received which will be applied to launch a new curriculum delivery method: virtual RTI throughout the week and OJL reserved for weekends.

Ms. Melissa Huffman (City of Phoenix) – There are currently 2 Gardeners, 6 Electricians and 3 Solid Waste Equipment Operators. Current recruitment for 2 more Gardeners is underway. Training for the Solid Waste Equipment Operators is also being revamped to include bulk trash to widen the spectrum of opportunities in the coming year. Likewise, anticipating the approval of a new classification for general apprentices next month to expand apprenticeship throughout other departments who have expressed interest.

Mr. Rob Stenson (City of Phoenix ARIZONA@WORK) - There is more discussion on Grant and WIOA participation and how to fund and interact with more apprenticeship programs. Some of the ways to achieve this goal is to increase OJT opportunities with apprenticeship programs. Maricopa County has been the go-to for the RTI funding so the City of Phoenix would like to position itself to be the OJT funding component.

Mr. Frank Grijalva (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - IBEW International) – Most, if not all, construction programs are all trying to look for bigger space to accommodate their increasing numbers. They are also experiencing difficulties in finding and recruiting trained and qualified workers, particularly Substation Electricians. Differences in interpretation of current Marijuana Laws has also exacerbated this workforce recruitment problem.

Ms. Linda Vedo (Central Arizona Project) – Still at 6 apprentices, with 2 more on the way. Nothing new to report. CAP just (significantly) raised all CT payrates as a retention strategy as they are losing most of their workforce to other employers.

Mr. Charles Hankins (Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station) -- There are 30 apprentices, 5 maintenance interns and 2 pre-apprentices. The hiring process went underway in August and interviewed 70 candidates, and ending up hiring 8 apprentices, 6 interns and 4 pre-apprentices. Two of the current pre-apprentices will roll over onto the apprenticeship programs. Their pre-apprenticeship program pulls directly from WestMEC which was started a year ago.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Anthony asked the public to introduce themselves. There were no additional comments from the Public.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be on January 12, 2022. Same format. (Virtual) Committee members will be notified with an invitation to the next meeting to include an agenda for the meeting and draft minutes of this meeting. Future meetings are scheduled quarterly on the second Wednesday of that month (January, April, June, and October) from 8am – 10am. This may change should the Committee decide on having in-person meetings again.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to close was made by Mr. Hankins and seconded by Mr. Anthony. Meeting adjourned at 9:14 am.